

# FACT SHEET



**Tri-County Public Airport Site  
Herington, Kansas**

**March 1998**

## INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 7 is currently taking action to address contaminated drinking water wells in rural Herington, Morris County, Kansas, near the Tri-County Public Airport. The site was once known as the Herington Army Air Field (HAAF). Well samples indicated the presence of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the groundwater at levels above public drinking water standards, also known as maximum contaminant levels (MCLs). The EPA and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) are providing bottled water to those residences whose drinking water source exceeds the MCL for trichloroethylene (TCE), carbon tetrachloride and/or ethylene dibromide (EDB).

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Currently, EPA is investigating the source of the contamination. Once the source has been identified, a Potentially Responsible Party (PRP) search will be conducted in an attempt to determine the parties responsible for the contamination. If you have any information about the use of solvents at the site or may know of anyone who worked at the Herington Army Airfield in the 1940s, please contact EPA at:

Janice Kroone, On-Scene Coordinator  
U.S. EPA Region 7  
726 Minnesota Ave.  
Kansas City, KS 66101  
(913) 551-7005 -or-  
1-800-848-4568, enter "EPA7" to leave a message

## BACKGROUND

The Herington Army Air Field (HAAF) was utilized by the Department of Defense (DOD) between 1942 and 1947. In 1948, the federal government transferred the property to the city of Herington. The city owned the site from 1948 until 1979, when the site was transferred to the Tri-County Public Airport Authority. In addition to the use of the site by the Army, the city, and

the Airport Authority, it has been leased to numerous other entities who have used it for industrial purposes.

In January 1995, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) conducted a site investigation of the former HAAF. The investigation concentrated on areas of potential contamination from former DOD activities. Several volatile organic compounds (VOCs), including trichloroethylene (TCE), carbon tetrachloride, and 1,2-dichloroethylene (1,2-DCE) were detected in groundwater as were fuel-related chemicals such as: benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene, and xylene.

In May 1996, KDHE conducted a Preliminary Assessment/Screening Site Inspection (PA/SSI). Groundwater samples indicated TCE contamination in an on-site supply well. On August 13, 1997, EPA sampled private drinking water wells, two water supply wells located at the site, and several wells used for watering cattle. Sampling data taken from residential wells located north and northwest of the site indicated TCE contamination above the MCL. TCE was not found in the two Tri-County Public Airport water supply wells. TCE is commonly used as an industrial solvent.

Sampling results from the August 13 sampling event justified further sampling of private drinking water wells to the northwest of the Tri-County Public Airport. On October 6-8, 1997, EPA and KDHE took additional drinking water samples in and around the site. Test results indicated that 21 samples had levels of TCE above the MCL. Six of those 21 samples were also found to have levels of carbon tetrachloride and ethylene dibromide (EDB) above the MCL. As a follow-up to the August sampling, EPA sampled the two Tri-County Public Airport water supply wells again in December 1997. Once again, the December sampling event did not detect TCE in the airport drinking water system. This system will continue to be periodically sampled for TCE.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

If you have questions about this fact sheet or need additional information about this site, please contact:

Dana Riffel, Community Involvement Coordinator  
U.S. EPA Region 7  
726 Minnesota Avenue  
Kansas City, Kansas 66101  
(913) 551-7003 or toll-free 1-800-223-0425